

57
THE
GRAND PROCESSION
OF
MUSSELBURGH FAIR,
OR
MARCHES RIDING;
DELINEATED IN A
P O E M.
IN WHICH

The Reader will be entertained with a natural Relation, and lively Representation, of the Order in which the MAGISTRATES and several INCORPORATIONS marched, the 12th of November 1790.

BY PATRICK TAIT, *R*
A Member of one of the INCORPORATIONS.

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TO THE HONOURABLE

The MAGISTRATES of MUSSELBURGH
and FISHER-ROW, and the several INCOR-
PORATIONS of that antient Burgh,

THE riding of the marches, or the fair,
It is a sight most curious and rare.
It's not like other fairs that's kept here,
At a set time is holden every year.

The last two ridings of it here was seen,
A run of years as large did interveen
As twenty-six times that the circling sun
His annual course did thro' the Zodiac run.

Yet it has oft been ridden here before,
And is a custom from the days of yore.
In future times may ridden be again,
Our properties and rights for to maintain.

Some would again have me to undertake
Another poem on the march to make.
But by this time, I came to understand
'Twas undertaken by another hand.

In case he had wrote in a higher strain,
And should of me by far the laurels gain.
Left in his lines he did so brightly shine,
As cast a dark shade on the like of mine;

Thinks I I'll wait, or forth I see him come.
If after him, if I have any room,
My neighbour's name I don't design to blot;
Yet still I think, for all that he has wrote,
Something to add yet room enough I've got.

When that the Magistrates, and Council here,
 The marches riding settled the last year;
 And when while before the time did come,
 'This thro' the town proclaim'd by tuck of drum.

The cryer then to ride, he told none might,
 Except then burghers there pretend a right.
 Some youths were then with such ambition fir'd,
 To ride the marches they so much desir'd.

Some of them freely parted with their coin,
 For right this grand procession for to join.
 And when it came unto the riding day,
 The morning it was fair, tho' somewhat gray.

Some gentlemen I saw in form compleat,
 In grand array, come marching up the street;
 And one of those had at that time a stand
 Of fine bright colours holding in his hand:

And still they marched up a while before
 They stopped at our jolly Bailie's door.
 Then in a little he was fully dress'd,
 Mounted his horse with them, rode off in haste,

To Musselburgh they then did streight repair
 To Bailie WILSON's, for to meet him there.
 He and the company with him was class'd,
 Another stand of colours they possess'd.

As soon as they then did their neighbours view,
 Mov'd from their place, and towards them they drew;
 And when in honour they thus met together,
 They then most kindly did salute each other.

With Bailie YOUNG were two of his young sons,
 To ride the marches had made hearty boons.
 Got little swords, and each thing requisite,
 Suiting for them, that for the march were meet.

They with this honour'd company were class'd;
 Then to the park they marched with the rest.
 Some other boys belonging to the place
 Upon the march did show their youthful face;

And on this day, their young courageous hearts
 Upon the march did act full manful parts.
 Each corporation, ere they rode this fair,
 Did to their standard-bearer first repair.

When they with him, and him with them had met;
 Off from his door with flying colours set;
 For to pursue the honours of the day.
 Unto their meeting place they fast made way.

I of that park, into which up they drew,
 Ere they set out, did of them get a view:
 And in that place, where viewing them I stood,
 With them spectators were a numerous crowd.

When introduc'd in such a form as this,
 I now do judge it would not be amiss
 To drop the form of ten feet verse,
 For six and eight, the march for to rehearse.

Tho' I should rouse my fancy, rack my brains,
 I'd, after all my labour, lose my pains,
 To think that I could any words invent
 That could the march more proper represent.

Now, when said this, let me now then for straight
 Return again unto the six and eight.

ADVERTISEMENT.

As I have said before in the verses that I have been desired, by several persons, to make, another Poem on the fair and riding of the marches might be made, so, beginning to think whether or not I could cast it into any new, or different form of words, I found nothing occur to me more proper, or pat to the purpose, then what I had used before: and as it is long since the last riding, there are now few of the old poems in the place, and I may never see another riding of the fair, I thought it as good to keep by the old, as bring in a worse one in its place. After all, there are several additions and alterations in it, to make it suit this last time, which hath cost me no little pains.

P. TAIT.

T H E
G R A N D P R O C E S S I O N

O R

MUSSELBURGH FAIR, &c.

NOVEMBER here on the twelfth day,
The Burghers that reside
In MUSSELBURGH and FISHER-ROW,
Their marches then did ride.

Each man equipt with all that suits
A gentleman most grand,
With saddle, bridle, and with boots,
A sword into his hand.

Those were in office of them then,
Fine fashes they did wear,
Like military gentlemen,
For grandeur did appear.

Into a park first up they drew,
All in the Baillies fight,
Who then did all the Trades review,
And ordered them aright.

Their Honours then, the orders gave,
To all upon that day,
With peace and honour to behave
To others on ~~that day~~ *the way*

They union much did recommend,
 And wish'd it might take place,
 Among themselves for to contend,
 Would much the march disgrace.

This sage advice had such effect,
 On all the Trades were there,
 It all their old debates did check,
 When they did ride this fair.

Each took the place to them assign'd,
 With greatest chearfulness,
 Without a grudge into their mind,
 That any did express.

Now all in order ev'ry Trade,
 Themselves in ranks they drew,
 They got all things then ready made,
 Their march for to pursue.

With each a Captain on their head,
 Lieutenant in their rear,
 An Adjutant each of them had,
 Their ranks to dress and clear.

Each had a set of music fine,
 Delightful for to hear,
 And each a brisk genteel Ensign,
 Their standard for to bear.

A good procession for to make,
 When marching on the way,
 In triple ranks the road they take,
 In regular array.

It justly was the Baillies due,
 To march upon their head,
 And like themselves attended too,
 When they the van did lead.

The Officers for this intent,
 They caused ride before,
 That these might serve to ornament
 Their Honours march the more.

A jolly Smith and Ferrier,
 Did sword and breast-plate wear,
 And as the Baillies harbinger,
 Before them did appear.

White gloves he wore were fringed fine,
 With silk like to a crow,
 Black boots with antient spurs did shine,
 No little pomp did show.

He had a wig upon his head,
 Of a peculiar make,
 Made many a one that day indeed,
 Of him great notice take.

He on the march was in this place,
 Twenty-six years before,
 That day he shew'd his rever'd face,
 Even when above four-score.

Much of this old man might be said,
 If I had for it room,
 But now aside it must be laid,
 On with the march to come.

Themselves then, and their Counsellors,
 March'd forward with a grace,
 A band of fine musiciansers,
 Did play before their face.

And as they with their melody,
 The ear did charm most fine,
 They did delightful to the eye,
 In red and blue did shine.

White rods their Honours they did wear,
 Signs of their dignity,
 Their title just to rule bear,
 By these did testify.

The present Treasurer and the late,
 Did each a standard bear,
 While Burghers not incorporate,
 Came marching in their rear.

Their colours in good order now,
 Made of the silk most fine,
 And was compos'd of white and blue,
 With ardiant lustre shine.

Three Anchors and three Mussels, on
 Their colours did appear,
 As Arms that the Honest Town,
 of MUSSELBURGH doth bear.

The Motto on their colours it
 Was short, but good and rare,
 For thereon H O N E S T Y was writ,
 In letters full and fair.

A thing that vastly well becomes
 Each of the ruling train,
 Whoe'er the character assumes,
 Of ruling over men.

Two very youthful Gentlemen,*
 Did then in honour ride,
 As Guardians to their colours then,
 Each station'd on a side.

In fine, they and the Council all,
 Appear'd in such array,
 They then an air that was not small,
 Of grandeur did display.

Their Honours march'd on, and now
 Each Trade in their own place,
 Appears in order to our view,
 All marching up apace.

See now the Wrights first forward step,
 Behind the Council's rear,
 Their were two men with hairy Caps,
 Did on their front appear.

Each in his hand upon that day,
 He then an Ax did hold,
 And with it marking on the way,
 Both look'd grave and bold.

* The two sons of BAILIE YOUNG.

They then, with other Hammermen,
Went first of all the Trades,
Who on their hats were wearing then
Their red and blue cockades.

This Trade, the van got of the rest,
This day to their renown ;
And justly of it were possess'd,
Their colours bore the Crown.

A pair of Compasses and Square,
Upon them placed also,
Which with exactness doth declare,
About their work they go.

Some figures on them did appear,
The which did plainly shew,
With them Sieve-wrights and Coopers were,
Together joined too.

The Motto plainly doth import,
Of this fraternity,
That they each other should exhort,
To peace and unity.

So many Wrights all here were join'd,
And all in good array,
They with no little splendor shin'd,
While marching on the way.

The Taylors next comes marching now,
And on their colours green,
Adam and Eve full to the view,
Were clearly to be seen.

After they knew their nakedness,
Exposed by their sins,
He that them made, did them then dress,
And cloth with coats of skins.

Is it not rude that on this Trade,
That any should cast blots,
When our first parents maker made,
Unto them their first coats.

Th' expanded Siffars they had here,
 Like those with which they cut,
 The cloth which doth so neat appear,
 By them in order put.

Those of this Trade do work complete,
 Their work their art it shows,
 Which is well seen upon the street,
 On gentlemen and beaux.

Thus they the grandees of the earth,
 And others too adorn,
 For it is plain that at our birth,
 We are all naked born.

Cockades they wore upon that day,
 Were like their colours green,
 And thus when marching on the way,
 Appear'd with graceful mien.

Now comes the Craft dress'd to the life,
 Whose Colours bore a Crown,
 There you might see the Cutting-knife,
 A little lower down.

The memory of their antient Trade,
 To keep it still in fame,
 Upon their hats they also had
 The figure of the same.

Two Corporations of the same,
 Together were combin'd,
 And they as one that day became,
 By Union closely join'd.

Their Colours in two standards seen,
 Did such an air display,
 They look'd as grand as it had been
 Their Crispianus' day.

This Trade is of great usefulness,
 For none are cloth'd complete,
 However richly they do dress,
 Without shoes on their feet.

The Bakers brave do now appear,
 Whose colours show their trade,
 Both rich and poor, its very clear,
 They all by bread are fed.

Two Hinds upon their Colours plac'd,
 Did make appearance fine,
 And these two, one another fac'd,
 As straight as on a line.

These creatures might be placed there,
 And with their arms unite,
 Because they venison are rare,
 For pyes and baken meat.

Spectators also might espy,
 Their Colours made appear,
 A thing that great congruity,
 Unto their Trade doth bear.

A sheaf of Wheat thence doth proceed,
 The flour so fair and fine,
 When once they bake it into bread,
 May serve a King to dine.

Their Colours' Motto as much says,
 What mercies them befall,
 That they unto their Maker's praise,
 Shall still ascribe them all.

The orange coloured cockades,
 The Bakers they did wear,
 And on horse-back those jolly lads,
 Did very brisk appear.

Next comes that very antient Trade,
 Which Gardeners we call:
 For Adam he these orders had,
 Or ever he did fall.

When he was in the Garden plac'd,
 The scripture doth declare,
 That he was order'd for to dress,
 And keep it in repair.

This then would seem the only trade,
 In innocence employ'd,
 But Adam from his duty fled,
 And it short while enjoy'd.

They at this time had such a flower,
 Of an extensive height,
 It is difficult to be sure,
 For to discribe it right.

Of their own trade I asked one,
 What name it should receive,
 To call an imperial Crown,
 He me this answer made.

There Adam was, and also Eve,
 And the forbidden tree,
 Spectators they might well preceive,
 And on their colours see.

Green gilded leaves they then in place
 Of their cockades did wear,
 They like their trades then in this case,
 Did to the view appear.

The Weavers they do now appear,
 Who with variety
 Of curious work, do witness clear,
 Their ingenuity.

The rich, the poor, the high, the low,
 The peasant and the peer,
 Unto their art do greatly owe,
 The garments that they wear.

There is something said of this trade,
 Writ in sacred page,
 They still in honour should be had,
 Unto the latest age.

What thing the divine architect,
 By Moses them desir'd,
 That they might do the same direct,
 With wisdom them inspir'd.

And as that with a hand divine,
 Endued then were they,
 Is there not yet a gen'us fine,
 Among them to this day.

Upon their colours did appear,
 The spotted Leopard's head,
 The shuttle in his teeth did bear,
 That flies with so much speed.

A Motto written was below,
 That says our days exceeds,
 The shuttle's swiftness, ev'n although
 It flieth o'er the threads.

Spectators might that day espy,
 Their stockings were all white,
 This piece of uniformity,
 The eye did much delight.

Cockades they had of fine light blue,
 That they were wearing then,
 And very well, unto the view,
 Look'd these ingenious men.

The Fleshers came up in the rear,
 Wearing the bonnets blue,
 On which did their cockades appear,
 Compos'd of divers hue.

In days of old our Scottish Kings,
 Blue bonnets they did wear,
 Or 'ere the slutch'd, or nooked things
 In fashion did appear.

So on this day the Flether lads,
 Mounted on stately steeds,
 Look'd very well with their cockades,
 In bonnets on their heads.

Their colours were entirely new,
 Saint Andrew's cross thereon,
 On it and on their bonnets too,
 The same was plac'd upon.

That they might somewhat of their trade,
 Unto spectators shew,
 Some Bullock-heads they also had,
 Plac'd on their colours too.

Their Motto is a depth profound,
 Discover'd but by few,
 Yet some there are that did expound
 Its meaning this to shew.

Whate'er is in the shambles fold,
 Of clean and wholesome meat,
 To buy the same you may behold,
 And of it freely eat.

No questions now for conscience sake,
 Ye need for to enquire,
 But freely now ye may partake,
 Of what ye do desire.

They all their horses fat vastly well,
 And kept a bridle-hand,
 Like those of riding who have skill,
 And can the horse command.

In fine, the Fleshers, tho' that they
 Were station'd in the rear,
 They did as brisk upon that day,
 As any trade appear.

And he who Bailie was of late,
 This right did him befall,
 This place of honour for to get,
 To march in rear of all.

There many one did longing wait,
 And near the park abide,
 To see them march out from its gate,
 Towards the water-side.

Between the water and the maul,
 In all this grand array,
 The Magistrates, the trades and all,
 To MUSSELBURGH made way.

And when they came into the Town,
 The found of ringing bells,
 Unto their honour and renown,
 It then their welcome tells.

A sword most clear at this Town-end,
 Each from his scabbard drew,
 And with it naked in his hand,
 The town he marched through.

Their colours made a splendid show,
 Sweet sounds their music rais'd,
 Spectators then were not a few,
 That stood and at them gaz'd.

For, from the City here were found,
 Great numbers did repair,
 From the adjacent country round,
 Came crouds from every where.

Yea, many one from divers parts,
 Came here that day unbidden,
 Full volunteers with joyfull hearts,
 To see the marches ridden.

Not only some on horse and foot,
 But even in coaches too,
 Of gentlemen did here come out,
 Like as to a review.

The day for pleasure was devout,
 When all both bound and free,
 Did to themselves the time allot,
 A day of Jubilee.

A lively landscape to the eye,
 Now open'd ev'ry where,
 Which-ever trade we did espy,
 At riding of this fair.

While each of these did to the view,
 Disclose a diff'rent scene,
 And each with objects somewhat new,
 Spectators entertain.

Eastward, displaying all their pride,
 The Links they did ride thro'.
 Their march not far from the sea side,
 Did to West-pans pursue.

When there they had a circuit made,
 Around their property,
 About unto the west they led,
 With banners lifted high.

By Pinkie-dike their march they made,
 Thro' Newbigging also.
 To Inveresk by the new road,
 With all their pomp and show.

A nobleman of special note,
 As they his house past by,
 Out from his gate to them he got,
 That he might them espy.

This person great, in office grand,
 As he is station'd here,
 O'er all the forces in Scotland,
 The chief command to bear.

Their honours then, the trades and all,
 Of him did notice take,
 To him, as did of right befall,
 First their obeisance make.

This nobleman, long in their debt,
 Wanted not to remain,
 When with that measure they him met,
 Returned them again.

And now the kirk they marched by,
 As westward from the same,
 There lay some of their property,
 That they by right could claim,

The bell doth in the steeple ring,
 With lofty sound and high,
 On honour to them it did ring,
 As they were marching by.

Downward from thence they rode but slow
 Lest some should catch a fall.
 The bridge then rode along also,
 The market street and all,

Westward they still yet marched on,
 Before they came until
 Magdalane-bridge, that's hard upon,
 And nigh to Brunstane-mill.

Their western point was near this arch.
 Eastward again they go.
 And now directly take their march
 Straight out thro' Fisher-row.
 With all their usual airs display'd,
 With naked sword in hand,
 Spectators on the street array'd,
 In numbers great did stand.

The press gang, they were lying here,
 When this parade down went,
 Who did with many joyful cheer,
 Them highly compliment.

The trades then did not let them show
 These compliments in vain,
 But did their colours to them low,
 In gratitude again.

The water they rode thro' and then
 The mill-hill marched thro';
 East to the links, once more again,
 Their march is ended now.

And all in peace as they began
 They did their march conclude;
 For even to a single man
 Was no behaviour rude.

The Baillies then to every trade
 Their compliments they gave,
 And did declare that they were glad
 They did so well behave.

Then off the field did march, that they
 Might dine, and after spend
 What time remained of the day,
 With pleasure to the end.

Upon their march the Baillies, who
 Took of each trade much care,
 When to an inn each trade did go,
 The same took also there.

They messengers of honour sent,
 Then every trade to view;
 For which no trade did them neglect
 Their gratitude to show.

Then every trade selected some,
 And ordered that they
 Should to their Honours presence come,
 Their due respects to pay.

This march, in ev'ry circumstance,
 Is almost traced thro',
 I therefore will no more advance,
 But wishing, end it now.

May MUSSELBURGH, that honest town,
 Prosperity e'er share,
 Enjoying honour and renown
 At riding of their fair.

P. S. Of ev'ry trade were some select
 These marches for to ride,
 That on the road lay not direct,
 But on each distant side.

One with a spade earth penetrate,
 To show their property,
 While those aside at seeing that
 All is our own did cry.

Conclusion, by way of Inference, from the whole.

What town can now with MUSSELBURGH compare,
 Or show such grandeur riding at a fair.
 Ev'n EDINBURGH, our grand metropolis,
 Has no procession in the form of this.
 Their fine train bands do no such figure cut,
 'Tis only a procession upon foot.
 They only march along like infantry,
 We ride like horsemen and commanders high.



